



CANAMEX Fwy. won't clip area

But many people have thought so

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At a recent meeting organized in opposition to the proposed South Mountain Freeway, many people seemed surprised, if not shocked, to hear of a connection between the roadway and the so-called CANAMEX Freeway.

"This is the first time I heard it was part of this CANAMEX Freeway," Ahwatukee resident Kitty Pesetsky said. "That concerns me."

Arizona Department of Transportation officials say there's a reason few people have heard that the proposed piece of Loop 202 is part of the five-state network of roadways that makes up the CANAMEX Corridor - it's not.

"The South Mountain Freeway would not be part of the CANAMEX Corridor," ADOT spokesman Timothy Tait said. "The whole idea of the CANAMEX is they're trying to get up to U.S. 93 by Wickenburg because they want to get up to I-15 (in Nevada). The proposed South Mountain Freeway would take them out of the way."

The purpose of the CANAMEX Corridor is to make it easier to transport goods, services, information and people between Canada, Mexico and the United States. It was first defined in 1995 as part of the National Highway Systems Designation Act.

According to the CANAMEX report, the proposed four-lane highway from Mesa to Phoenix would be in the vicinity of Phoenix.

The Web site reads: In Arizona, the proposed highway from Tucson to Phoenix and from Phoenix to Mesa would be in the vicinity of Phoenix.

The "in the vicinity of Phoenix" part of the report is a bit more specific. That west on I-8 until heading north on I-19 from Nogales to Tucson, I-10 from Tucson to Phoenix and I-17 from Phoenix to Wickenburg.

But a Maricopa Association of Governments report recommends CANAMEX would then head north on I-17 from Phoenix to Wickenburg, I-19 from Nogales to Tucson, I-10 from Tucson to Phoenix and I-17 from Phoenix to Wickenburg. The proposed highway along Wickenburg and Vulture Mine roads to join up with U.S. 60 and eventually U.S. 93.



for the development of a continuous corridor from Idaho and Montana into Canada.

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ADOT spokesman Matt Burdick reiterated that there is no connection between the proposed freeway through Ahwatukee and the CANAMEX Corridor.

"There have been a few people in Ahwatukee that have constantly brought up the CANAMEX stuff," Burdick said.

"Despite the information we've given them to show it's not part of CANAMEX, they continue to harp on it."

At last Saturday's meeting, opponents of the freeway sought to link CANAMEX with the South Mountain Freeway.

They talked about potential dangers of hazardous cargo being transported through the area and trucks filling up on "dirty diesel" fuel in Mexico (with higher levels of sulfur than allowed in the United States) and spewing fumes into the Arizona air.

Melanie Pai, president and one of the founders of Protecting Arizona's Resources and Children (PARC), said that the official route wouldn't necessarily be the one followed. That would especially be true for vehicles with business or facilities within Phoenix.

"The proposed route is lengthy and anyone who has a stop in Phoenix will be using (the South Mountain Freeway) as an alternative," Pai said. "Two of the trucking companies, Swift and Knight, have facilities located just on the other side of (South Mountain). It's a shorter route."

The current proposed route of the South Mountain Freeway would follow the path of Pecos curving north to meet I-10 at 55th Avenue.